Bookmark Placed in Vietnam War Books Given Away at Library Event in 2015

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER ONE
Chapter 1, Vietnam Veterans Of America
Book Giveaway & Program
The War, the Vets, the Memorial
Sat., May 23, 10 a.m. to noon, Fox Room, Rutland Free Lib.

President	Adrian J. Megrath
Vice President	Lawrence D. Young
Treasurer	David C. Mathis
Secretary	Jack Crowther

Board Members

Richard P. Doyle Fred Hellmuth
William J. Whitney Edgar S. Crosby Jr.
John Bergeron

Presidents of Chapter 1

Don Bodette	1980 - 1984
Jake Jacobsen	1984 - 1989
Mark Truhan	1989 - 1991
Mike Divoll	1991 - 1992
Steve Faye	1992 - 1994
John Bergeron	1995 - 2004
Andy Megrath	2004 - Present

Deceased Members

Brian V. Abbey Kenneth H. Hollmann
Don Bodette * Eugene Miner
Jim Delong George Naumann
Mike Dodge Donald Robichaud
Stanley Dulski Dennis Ross
Donald C. Thompson

*First president of Chapter 1

Chapter 1, Vietnam Veterans of America
15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701
www.vvachapter1.org

25TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

CHAPTER 1
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
RUTLAND, VERMONT

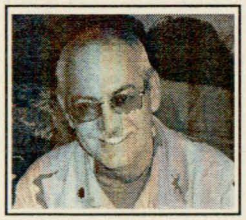
The Palms Restaurant
36 Strongs Ave., Rutland, Vermont
April 16, 2005, 6 p.m.

Celebrating 25 Years of Service to Veterans
By the First Chapter
Of Vietnam Veterans of America

Chartered April 13, 1980

Special Tribute

Lt. Col. Mark Truhan



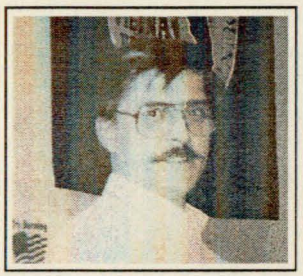
Lt. Col. Mark Truhan

U.S. Army Reserve Lt. Col. Mark Truhan, of Brattleboro, a current and charter member of Chapter 1, as well as its third president, serves in Iraq training Iraqi army officers about 40 miles north-northeast of Baghdad .

Mark served in Vietnam in 1971 and 1972 as an advisor to a Montagnard ranger battalion in the highlands and was awarded two Purple Hearts and three Bronze Stars with "V."

We salute Mark's more than 30 years of service to his country and fellow veterans and pray for his safe return to Vermont in mid-November of this year.

How VVA Chapter 1 Began



Don Bodette

"Together then, together now," was the idea that drove Don Bodette, the Rutland man whose experiences in Vietnam and whose commitment to veterans shaped the national organization, Vietnam Veterans of America.

His efforts began in the 1970s, when memories of the Vietnam War were still fresh. Many veterans felt not only the pain of psychological and physical injuries but also the stigma and of having served in an unpopular war.

From Don's plainly worded newspaper ad, "Vietnam veterans, we need to talk," began efforts to help veterans cope with a variety of war-related problems. Jake Jacobsen, Albert and Mary Trombley, Mike Dodge, Dennis Ross and Mark Truhan were among others active in those early years.

In 1979, Bobby Muller, the founder of Vietnam Veterans of America, met Don Bodette during a trip to Vermont. Don supported the notion of an organization for Vietnam era veterans, but felt it needed to mobilize locally in chapters to truly succeed. He persuaded Bobby Muller to adopt his model.

Chapter 1 of the Vietnam Veterans of America was established on April 13, 1980, when Bobby Muller presented its charter to Don Bodette.

Don Bodette, 48, died of cancer on Aug. 10, 1997. His work goes on.

Banquet Program

Social Hour	6 p.m.
Buffet	7 p.m.
Welcome, Introduction of Guests, Remarks	8:15 p.m.

Adrian Megrath, Chapter 1 President
Thomas H. Corey, National VVA President
Hon. James H. Douglas, Governor of Vermont

Dancing will follow the formal program. A table of military memorabilia and 25th Anniversary momentoes has been set up for your inspection and purchases.

Earliest Members of Chapter 1

Ed Bates
Donald Bodette *
Mike Boston
John Brock
Sam Bunge
William Cijka
Stanley Clark
Mike Corcoran
Jim Delong
Ralph Dennison
Mike Dodge *
Tom Donellin
Jim Esposito
William Fagginger-Auer
Sam Farrington
William Fisk
Bill Fitzgerald
Jere Fullerton
Norman Gagnon
David Harrison
James Hart
Clark Howland
George Hurley
Jake Jacobsen
Rod Kenyon
George Lambert
Robert Lubinsky
Eugene Miner *
Michael Moran
George Naumann *
James Olmstead
Timothy Payne
Jack Reed
James Reed
Thomas Reed
Chris Ross
Dennis Ross *
Rusty Sachs
William Saupe
Philip Savery
Richard Starling Sr.
Charles Stevens Jr.
Mark Truhan
Albert Trombley
Mary Trombley
John Williams

* Deceased

CITY OF RUTLAND

Office of

JOHN J. DALEY

MEMORANDUM OF RESPECT

WHEREAS, the City of Rutland acknowledges with admiration the VETERANS OF THE VIET NAM CONFLICT, and

WHEREAS, the local Chapter of the Viet Nam Veterans is Chapter Number 1 in Vermont, and

WHEREAS, it is well known that they counsel their members and will go anywhere to assist them, and

WHEREAS, it is the main goal of this fine organization to present to the public as many sides of the Viet Nam era as is possible so that they, the public, can in turn decide for themselves, now

THEREFORE, be it known that the VIET NAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, RUTLAND CHAPTER NUMBER ONE will celebrate VETERAN'S WEEK, APRIL 1, 1981 at the COLLEGE OF ST. JOSEPH THE PROVIDER and all citizens are invited to share and participate.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL THIS 25th DAY OF MARCH 1981.

ATTEST: John W. Barrett

JOHN W. BARRETT
Rutland City Clerk

John J. Daley

JOHN J. DALEY, Mayor

SEAL OF THE CITY OF RUTLAND VERMONT

Officers of Chapter 1

President	**Adrian J. Megrath**
Vice President	**David C. Mathis**
Treasurer	**John McLaughlin**
Secretary	**Jack Crowther**

Board Members

Michael Divoll **George Henry**

Richard P. Doyle **Joanne Reynolds**

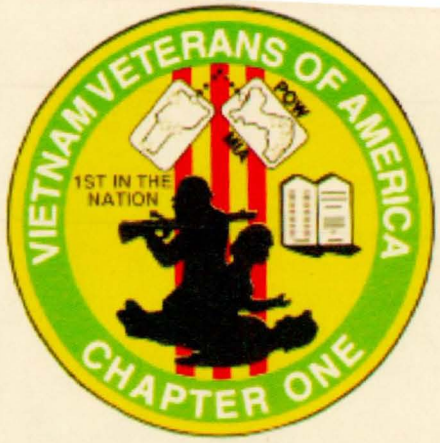
William Whitney

Chapter 1

Vietnam Veterans of America

15 Wales St., Rutland, Vt. 05701

www.vvachapter1.org



35th Anniversary

Chapter 1
Vietnam Veterans of America

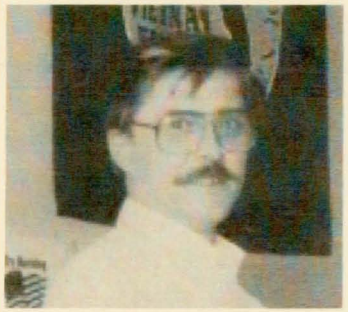
Book Giveaway & Retrospective

Rutland Free Library Fox Room
May 23, 2015, 10 a.m. to noon

Marking 35 Years of Service to Veterans
By the First Chapter
Of Vietnam Veterans of America

Chartered April 13, 1980

How VVA Chapter 1 Began



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Mark Truhan	**1989**	**1991**
Mike Divoll	**1991**	**1992**
Steve Faye	**1992**	**1994**
John Bergeron	**1995**	**2004**
Andy Megrath	**2004**	**2015**

Program

Welcome & History 10:15 a.m.
Jack Crowther

Dedication to the Families Of

Sal Clarino ** Clark Howland**

Jake Jacobsen ** Edwin Wiehe**

Gift of the Books Kerry O'Hara

What It Was Like

John McLaughlin **** Bub Crosby

Dick Doyle **** Joanne Reynolds

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Comments, Recognitions

Jack Crowther

Program Concludes 11:15 a.m.

Browsing Displays, Refreshments
11:15 a.m. to noon

Former storefront home of Chapter 1 on Center Street

DIAMOND AWARD

Whereas providing our people with the vision to overcome the challenges of today's society is the shared responsibility of all Americans, and

Whereas recognizing and supporting those outstanding individuals and groups who are succeeding in this task is one of the primary missions of the United to Serve America campaign, and

Whereas the below-named person or organization has provided a shining example of effective leadership in meeting the aforementioned challenges,

Therefore, be it hereby resolved, that

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1

be awarded the **United to Serve America Diamond Award** for outstanding service toward the betterment of our country.

Presented on this 14th day of May, Nineteen Hundred Ninety-Two, in the City of Rutland, Vermont.

UNITED TO SERVE USA AMERICA

ROBERT G. GRANT
National Co-Chairman

DONALD N. SILLS
National Co-Chairman

RONALD S. GODWIN
National Co-Chairman

The money paid to the Yellow Submarine was for lunch for the children of deployed Guardsmen that were attending Operation Yellow Ribbon at the Pittsford Police Academy. This was a week long day camp that gave the kids of local Guardsmen an opportunity to come together and learn many different things about local helping agencies, including, the fire and rescue teams, the police departments, as well as, the Army and Air National Guards. The children (approximately 25) visited local businesses to see the processing of marble and had a really great week.

2/18/2005 Check #135	$200.00	Vermont Military Asst. Fund State Level Account to Help Deployed Families in Emergencies
2-22-05 Date: ? Check #136	$381.10	CVPS Assistance for Family on Boardman Hill Road, West Rutland, VT
3/9/2005 Check #141	$200.00	Vermont Military Asst. Fund State Level Account to Help Deployed Families in Emergencies
3/30/2005 Check #142	$270.00	Credit Acceptance Assistance to a military family from Middle Road, North Clarendon with a partial car payment.
4/25/2005 Check #149	$316.21	Credit Acceptance Assistance to a military family from Middle Road, North Clarendon with a partial car payment
5/31/2005 Check #160	$370.20	Heather Hinckley Reimbursement to Heather for shipping care packages to our soldiers overseas.
1/31/2006 Check #182	$298.67	Darren Carter Assistance to military family from Cold River Road in Shrewsbury for electrician service from storm that damaged power input into their home from the main pole

If you need more information than this, please let me know and I will come up with something more.

Thanks again.

Heather Greene Hinckley
Family Assistance Center Representative
Rutland, Vermont

802-775-0194
802-775-0195 Fax
802-310-0879 Cell

Some help given to Nat'l Guard families by Chap. 1

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Heather Greene Hinckley

Family Assistance Center Representative

Rutland, Vermont

Clothes collected for flood victims in the South

Ethnic Smorgasbord

Staff Photos by Margo S

Randy Shannon (above) of the Rutland City Republican Committee serves up some kielbasa on Sunday at the annu Rutland Region Ethnic Festival. Heather Giddings of Rutland (below) samples some Cajun crawfish. Under sun skies and with summer-like temperatures, the seventh annual Ethnic Festival drew several thousand people to dow town's Center Street.

Ethnic Festival Draws Thousands Downtown

By CHRISTINE CUPAIUOLO
Herald Staff

It was difficult to decide which was hotter Sunday: the sun, or the "hell hot" sauce Lyndia Cobbett basted on Jamaican jerk chicken.

Corbett, of Taste of the South Catering, filled scores of plates with her chicken and ribs during the seventh annual Rutland Region Ethnic Festival.

Center Street was transformed into a sampling feast as 30 vendors dealt out delicacies ranging from dulse, a Japanese sea vegetable salad, to puto, Filipino rice muffins.

The corner of Wales and Center streets offered a musical smorgasbord, as five bands introduced music from Brazil, Ireland, Germany, Ethiopia and the Balkan region. The New Nile Orchestra played past the closing time of 7 p.m. with their fast-beat Ethiopian jams, prompting many watching to stand up and dance.

It was the first time in the festival's history that the event was held on Center Street, which was closed between Merchants Row and Wales Street. In previous years, the downtown parking deck has played host to the cultural and gustatory extravaganza, which also featured ethnic clothing and crafts for sale.

Kim Catterton, coordinator of the festival, said the move turned the event into a "real street festival."

"I think it's great. Everything is authentic — the entertainment, the food ... it's really high quality," Catterton said.

Rutland Area Food Co-op won the award for "most ethnic" booth. A four-tiered black and red pagoda designed by Tim Vile hovered over the crowds and the sushi for sale. Vile said it took volunteers a week or two to construct the 14-foot structure, plus a roof that reaches another seven feet into the air.

In this case, the theme followed the food. Vile said that the co-op received a lot of seaweed from Maine Coast Sea Vegetables, so they decided to cook Japanese food this year.

"I thought from there a pagoda would be kind of cool," Vile said, adding that it would make a good rain cover if one was needed.

Fortunately, it was not. After weeks of rain, the sun was a welcome sight to most, although there were some grumblings about the heat soaring into the mid-80s.

"You think it's hot here? This is nothing," said Aqueela As-Salaam, a resident of Richmond, Va., who is vacationing in Vermont this week. As-Salaam said she was staying in Ludlow, and decided to come to Rutland for the Ethnic Festival.

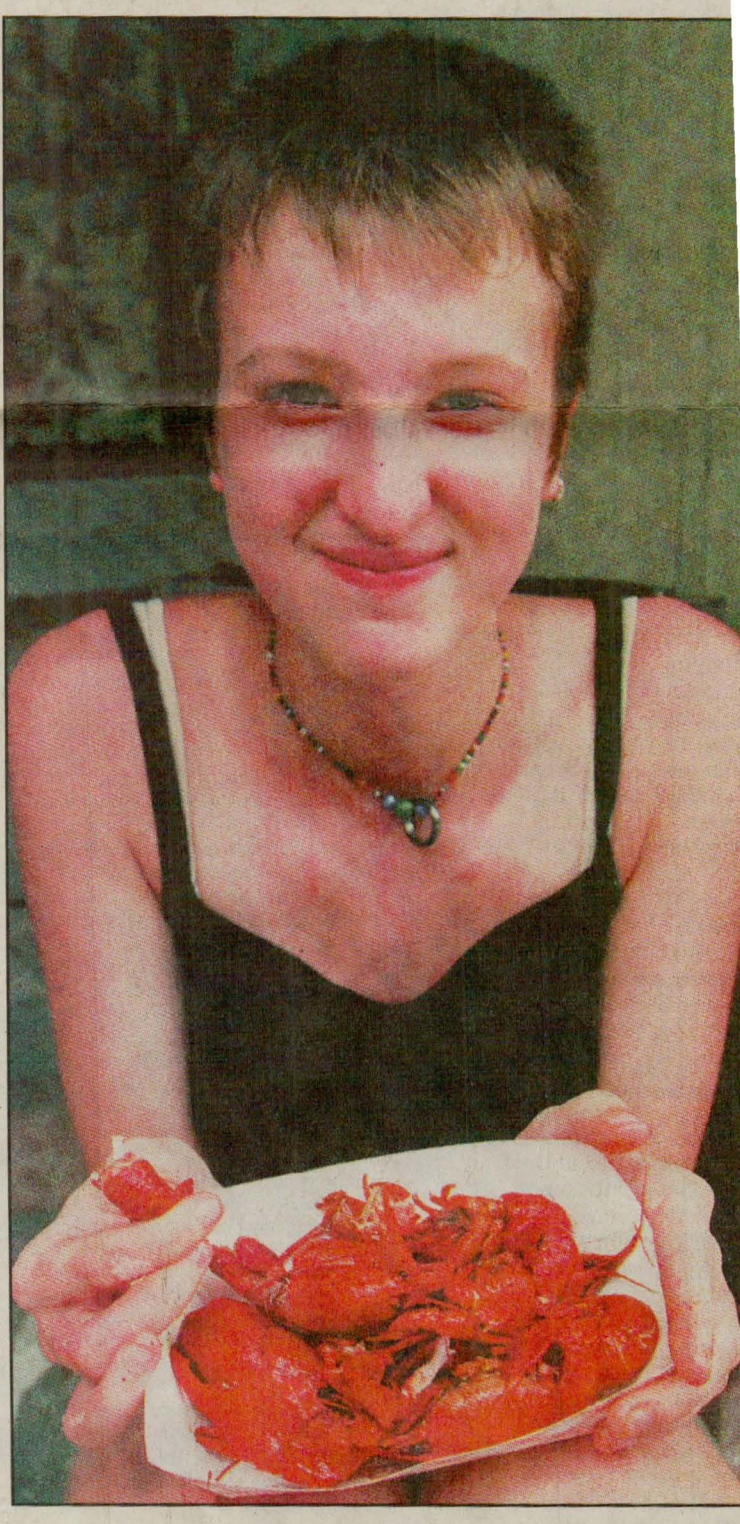
"The people are wonderful. The countryside is beautiful," she gushed about Vermont as she looked at flowing blouses for sale from India.

Sitting in chairs placed close to one another, Beverly Miller of Rutland and her mother Carol Billings of Rochester shared a large plate of, well, something.

"I don't know what it is. The people in front of me had a huge plateful and I said just give me $2 of whatever they have," Miller said with a laugh. "I'd rather be surprised."

"We didn't want to miss anything," Billings said, using her fork to dig up a portobello mushroom that was hiding under the rice and chicken. She pointed to something else. "We think this is an oyster."

(See Page 11: Festival)



Continued from Page 9

Across the way, Teen Two-Step, an amateur dance group that sponsors dance exchange programs, sold food from countries it has already visited — Costa Rica, Russia and New Foundland — to raise money for an upcoming trip to England in July.

The Rutland County Democrats and the Rutland City Republicans both set up booths concerned with decidedly more domestic affairs.

"We have to have a presence here. It's a good opportunity for candidates to meet people and create some good will," Rutland City Alderman Joe Tilden, a Democrat, said, offering slices of Danish butter cake.

Good will was also on order down the street. John Bergeron, president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1, spent Saturday night rolling a few hundred egg rolls along with several Vietnamese employees of California Nails. The Veterans group had a table next to California Nails, and both split the proceeds from the sale of the food. The two groups work in adjacent buildings on Center Street.

"It's working out well. These are great conditions and we have great weather," Bergeron said.

The International 4-H Youth Exchange proclaimed "peace through understanding" at their table, and offered an array of cookies and sweets neatly labeled with the cookie's name and recipe's origin. Samplings included Scottish short bread and German toffee-nut bars.

Alapana, a storytelling troupe from Middlebury, drew in crowds of children with a feast for eyes and ears. The children gathered inside a yurt to listen to the sounds of a balaphone, a wooden xylophone, and assorted gongs and bells as the trio acted out an Indian tale told through words, music and dance.

The Ethnic Festival has, in the past, drawn between 3,000 and 5,000 visitors.

Catterton estimated that the total draw this year was somewhere in the middle.

< Chap. ! Took Part

From left, unknown, Steve Faye, Dick Doyle, Andy Moschetto

Fund-raiser at Wal-Mart, 1997

ANTHONY EDWARDS / STAFF PHOTOS

Michael Divoll, owner of Michael's Toys on Merchants Row in Rutland, works on hand carving a wooden sign at his shop recently.

Work and play

Mike Divoll served as the fourth president of Chap. 1, from 1991-1992.

Wooden toymaking tradition lives on in Rutland

By GARETH HENDERSON
STAFF WRITER

Think of handmade wooden toys, and, for many people, memories of movies and photos from years gone by leap to mind.

But there's a place in Rutland where these handmade wooden toys are not only available for sale, but still made on site.

At Michael's Toy Company on Merchants Row, toymaker Michael Divoll continues the tradition of creating these masterpieces from wood.

"My toys are all handmade and designed by me," Divoll said.

Divoll, 71, has been making wooden

See Wooden, Page A6

Wooden

Continued from Page A5

toys for more than 30 years, and his businesses has had a downtown location for about 25 years. He not only makes toys, but also signs and carvings.

A shop like this is hard to find these days, but consistent business from visitors — and especially from the Killington area — has kept Divoll's business going.

"I'm a tourist business. The shop wouldn't be here, if it wasn't for that ski area up there," he said. "I get customers from all over the world."

He said signs have been the financial anchor of the business. Divoll has had many sign orders from the Killington area, some of them for private homes.

"The sign business helps pay the bills," he said.

Divoll said he can add color to the signs by using stains on the wood.

"I use stains predominantly," he said. "I like to keep the grain of the wood."

As for toys, Divoll creates a wide variety, including rocking horses, planes and trucks with hitches for wagons. He has also made a tractor-trailer. A number of his toys have a hitch for connecting another part, such as a wagon.

"I try to have different sizes at different prices," Divoll said.

ANTHONY EDWARDS / STAFF PHOTO

Various wooden toy train car pieces are for sale at Michael's Toy Company in downtown Rutland.

It's common for a grandparent to come in looking for a present for their grandchild, he said. The idea of a handmade wooden toy has a special draw for grandparents.

"It's kind of a nostalgia thing for them," Divoll said.

In his shop, Divoll also displays carvings that have scenes from all seasons, including a winter scene with snow. In fact, one of his carvings — a farm scene with a cow in the foreground — is displayed in the agriculture room at the State House.

Also in his downtown shop, Divoll has the equipment he uses make these handmade wooden creations. The major tools are three band saws and eight or nine drill presses. He sets his drill presses to handle different tasks, so he doesn't have to spend hours re-adjusting his equipment during a project.

After years in this business, Divoll has also considered the future of the operation and how it could continue for years to come.

Divoll, a Vietnam War veteran, wants to create a foundation and franchise his business, with the goal of passing the workshop and the business along to a disabled veteran. This would provide work to the veteran and would also allow Divoll to retire. In addition, it would provide some assurance that this traditional way of toymaking would continue.

"If I can do that, it would complete my life circle," Divoll said.

He said he'd help train the individual who takes over the business, and would also seek professional help to outfit the workshop so that it can be used by a disabled individual.

STATE OF VERMONT

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

Vermont Non-Profit Corporation Act (T.11,Ch.19)

The Office of Secretary of State hereby grants a

Certificate of Incorporation

to

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER #1 OF RUTLAND

a Vermont domestic non-profit corporation.

December 1, 1994

Given under my hand and the seal of the State of Vermont, at Montpelier, the State Capital

Donald M Hooper

Donald M. Hooper
Secretary of State

Vermont National Guard

Camp Johnson Colchester, Vermont

POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

September 12, 1992

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Maj Gen Reginald M. Cram, Adjutant General, Retired
MG Donald Brunelle, Commanding General, 26th ID
BG Benjamin W. Day, Jr., ADC, 26th ID
BG Harold M. Goldstein, Assistant Adjutant General-Army
BG Thomas E. O'Donovan, Vermont Deputy Adjutant General
BG Alan Noyes, Assistant Adjutant General, Retired
BG Jack Leonard, Assistant Adjutant General-Air
BG Anthony Dattilio, Assistant Adjutant General, Retired
Lt Col Charles Austin, Commander, AFROTC Det. 865
LT Brian Harrison, U.S. Naval Reserve and Command
Brad Reynolds, State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Clark "Sparky" Ferris, State Commander, American Legion
Mr. Steve Faye, President, VVA Chapter #1
Mr. James MacCahey, President, Vermont Vietnam Veterans
Mr. Leigh Sykes, Vietnam Veterans of the Valley
Commander, American Legion Post #1
Commander David Erkson, Marine Corps League
Commander Raymond J. Harwood, Vermont Ex-POWs
LTC Melvyn W. Fuller, Military Order of the World Wars
Mr. Paul Butler, VT Co-Chair, NE POW/MIA Network
Mr. Don Bodette, VT Co-Chair, NE POW/MIA Network
Mr. Don Amorosi, NY Chair, NE POW/MIA Network
Mr. Jake Jacobsen, Veterans Assistance Office
Mr. Ron Crisman, President, Vermont Militia Museum
Mr. Kenneth Leenstra, General Manager, General Electric
Mr. Fred Forehand, Vietnam Veterans Center
Angela Bryant Forrence, POW/MIA Hostages Concern

Steve Faye, Don Bodette, Don Amorosi, and Jake Jacobsen listed as Distinguished Guests

MILLARD A. PECK
COLONEL
UNITED STATES ARMY (Ret)

Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter Number One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, Vermont 05701

Dear Friends,

I realize many of you are disappointed by the final report of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs but Americans have not heard the last of this tragic chapter in our history.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter Number One, has exerted a strong influence in Vermont with their support of JRS 72, the POW/MIA Resolution passed by the Legislature last April. Your earlier drive to collect signatures from your fellow citizens in support of a moratorium on foreign aid, trade agreements, and diplomatic recognition with countries believed to be holding American servicemen was a dramatic success. You have shown your state and your nation that Vermonters are aware and concerned for the men and women who serve in uniform and are willing to "put it on the line" when it counts.

You have worked very hard to improve the lives of your fellow veterans and your community. Your dedication to your fellow veterans and your community is an example many must follow if our nation is to survive the challenges facing us today and tomorrow.

I am proud to have met and spoken with you at the "Moving Wall" in Rutland. I shall always fondly recall my visit to Vermont's Green Mountains, but I shall especially treasure the comraderie we shared and the extra effort of my very dear friends in Chapter Number One.

Sincerely,

Mike Peck

MILLARD A. PECK

NORTHEAST POW / MIA NETWORK
14 Catherine Street
South Glens Falls, NY 12803

May 20, 1997

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1
John Bergeron
13-G Center Street
Rutland, Vermont 05701

Dear John:

As you know, a weekly POW/MIA vigil has been held in Fair Haven's Memorial Park for nearly four years. Attendance has varied from 2 to hundreds on various nights, and we have had the opportunity to reach people from every walk of life and from all over the United States. Beginning as a silent vigil acknowledging the sacrifices of POW/MIA's and their families and loved ones and providing a visual message, it has evolved to a time dedicated to the original concept and a forum for discussion, explanation, and education on the issue. It has been a founding tenet that this is not era or geographically limited and is dedicated to ALL POW/MIA's.

The POW/MIA issue has the peaks and valleys of community concern, much as all veteran's issues, and interest decreases exponentially with the increase in time from the causal events. Because this issue has the potential to strike anyone without warning, and seemingly without recourse, comprehensive activism addressing the failures of the past and the needs of the present and future is essential. A strong visual message is needed to maintain the necessary consciousness. No one is exempt and all should be informed.

The park in Fair Haven has taken on an entirely new personality because of our presence there, and it is our hope to provide a tangible reminder that will serve the issue long after our passing. The vigil has received permission from the Town to build a POW/MIA Memorial. This memorial will be of the same design and dimensions as those already in place, but will be solely for the POW/MIA's. The traditional logo will dominate the bronze plague, with the message below simply being "Honoring all Prisoners of War, Missing in Action, Past, Present, and Future". I believe this will be the only such memorial in Vermont and will be located at the site of the longest continuous vigil in the State and one of the longest in North America.

We have the necessary permissions, a design, and a memorial designer. We now are trying to establish a fund raising program. Because this is a one time endeavor requiring limited resources, it is economically and logistically unsound to apply for a Federal I.D. number as a non-profit organization. We have been advised by the IRS to ask an existing

Don Amorosi, NY Chair **Vets Serving Vets 1-518-792-2057**

organization for permission to use their number as an umbrella for the project. The non-profit status is important in purchasing, in providing tax benefit for contributors, and in procuring simple, inexpensive bank services. It is our intention to have all donations go directly to Vermont National Bank in Fair Haven. They will administer a non interest bearing checking account for us, with all expenditures requiring two signature checks for processing. We feel that this is the best approach for accountability and control.

It is my hope that VVA Chapter 1 will favorably consider allowing us to use your Federal ID number for this project. I can assure you that only this project will be funded by our effort and that Chapter 1 will, in no way, be subject to any costs or liabilities in conjunction with this program. I will prepare, sign, and have notarized a statement clearly stating my intention to insure that Chapter 1 shares no financial responsibility from beginning to end. If we are fortunate to raise funds in excess of our needs, it would be our intention to divert the majority of those monies to Chapter 1 for use in the veterans' community.

At completion, the memorial will be dedicated and then deeded to the Town of Fair Haven. It is not our intention to acquire property or assets, but to provide a durable reminder of one of the terrible costs of war. We hope that awareness will provide deterrence.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Together Always,

Donald C. Amorosi

JAMES M. JEFFORDS
VERMONT

COMMITTEES:
LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–4503

Statement of Senator James M. Jeffords

On Passage of S. Res. 207

Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Vietnam Veterans of America

Mr. President:

I was proud to introduce S. Res. 207 on April 2nd of this year, and I am very pleased to mark its passage here tonight.

Tonight's action by the Senate is but one small step to redress the very reason why the founders of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) felt compelled to take action 20 years ago. In 1978, Vietnam Veterans were suffering under the wave of anti-Vietnam sentiment that had swept the nation. Little recognition was given to their sacrifices during the war. And in fact, there was even a great deal of official denial about the extent of the price that had been paid by these veterans, both physical and emotional. For instance, it would be years before Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was a recognized condition for many veterans and before the Federal Government admitted that our use of Agent Orange had left a terrible legacy of continued suffering for our veterans. The founders of the VVA felt that they needed an organization to speak directly to those needs. The outpouring of enthusiasm from the veterans themselves demonstrated the depth of these feelings.

I am also very proud that Chapter One was founded in my home town of Rutland, Vermont. Vermonters have maintained a prominent voice in the organization, and are active in defining its future direction.

The VVA is not focused just on the three decades behind us. It continues to look to the large challenges ahead both for veterans as a group and Vietnam Veterans in particular. Just as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a permanent reminder of the sacrifices of the past, the VVA will be a continual voice for pragmatism and commitment to the needs of the veteran.

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JIM JEFFORDS

UNITED STATES SENATOR • VERMONT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1998

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SENATE PASSES BILL HONORING VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Senate late last night approved a resolution commemorating the anniversary of a national veterans service organization, with roots in Rutland, Vermont. A resolution honoring the 20th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), introduced on April 3rd of this year by U.S. Sen. James M. Jeffords, R - Vt., passed the Senate by unanimous consent.

"I am extremely pleased that we were able to pass this bill before the end of the session. It is not often that we get a chance to thank those people who provide a voice for and advocate on behalf of our nation's Vietnam veterans," said Jeffords. "The VVA has done a tremendous job over the years in these areas and I am honored to offer this resolution as a token of my admiration."

The VVA is a Congressionally chartered national veterans service organization exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. While the VVA has a national membership of 51,000 with more than 500 chapters, its first chapter was chartered 18 years ago in Rutland. VVA state councils in 43 states coordinate the activities and programs of its national organization.

Vietnam Veterans of America State Council President John Miner of Bennington extended appreciation to Jeffords for his efforts in garnering senatorial recognition for the VVA during their twentieth year commemoration. "Recognition of the efforts by Vietnam Veterans, not only in Vermont, but across the nation, is deeply appreciated by the entire membership," Miner said.

VVA National President George C. Duggins stated,"Receiving recognition in Washington and throughout the nation indeed underscores the achievements of our membership built over the last 20 years, especially from the state where our first chapter was founded. We are thankful for the tributes extended to our organization by the Senate through this wonderful commemorative resolution."

- 30 -

PATRICK LEAHY
VERMONT

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
APPROPRIATIONS
JUDICIARY

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–4502

February 10, 1997

Mr. John Bergeron
Chapter One
P.O. Box 6301
Rutland, Vermont 05702

Dear Mr. Bergeron:

You and your fellow veterans should be interested in recent developments concerning our veterans hospital in White River Junction.

Several weeks ago, I learned the details of a VA plan to take resources away from medical facilities in the northeast and transfer them to southern states which supposedly have been receiving an influx of retired veterans. In light of ongoing efforts that VA is making to become more efficient, I was worried that White River Junction could suffer millions of dollars of cuts that would limit access to quality health care for Vermont veterans. We have already suffered cuts that recently reduced the size of our hospital from 150 beds to 110 beds.

Because of these concerns, I asked Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown to meet with Senator Jeffords, Congressman Sanders and me to discuss the future of health care for Vermont veterans. On January 29, we met in my Washington office.

I am pleased to report that Secretary Brown told us that our hospital at White River Junction is in good shape for the future. He insisted that the quality of health care for veterans in Vermont will be as good, if not better, in coming years than it has been in the past. Secretary Brown is a former combat Marine and former national executive of the D.A.V. who is known for his honesty and tireless advocacy for veterans.

Secretary Brown had more encouraging news. He told me that the VA hopes to open new outpatient clinics like the one we have at Appletree Bay in Burlington. These new clinics should allow many Vermont veterans to receive routine health care closer to their homes, while White River will always be available for more serious care. He also agreed to examine my proposal to double the size of the Appletree Bay clinic to better serve the many

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veterans in the Burlington area. Finally, the Secretary insisted that the resources transferred from Vermont to the South would be minimal. I hope so, because the commitment that our government has to veterans should stand as strong for Vermont as it does for other states.

While the delegation heard good news, I know that sunny predictions can change very quickly in the ongoing budget process in Washington. Needless to say, I will be closely following the VA commitment to our veterans. I will continue to fight to make sure that our government keeps its promises to those who gave so much to our nation.

I hope you find this information useful. Please stay in touch.

Sincerely,

Patrick Leahy

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

PJL\wfd

Vermont Patriot's Medal

Vermont State Council

President, John J. Miner
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
P.O. Box 4146
Bennington, Vermont 05201

VERMONT VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

25 June 1996

Dear Fellow Vermont Veterans,

On March 12, 1966, the Legislature of the State of Vermont approved a Joint Resolution for the Commanding General of the Vermont National Guard to cause a medal to be struck and presented to the next of kin of soldier killed in Vietnam. The medal was to be called the Vermont Patriot's Medal.

I am pleased to announce that the medal is now being struck and the presentation has been scheduled for September 21, 1996. The medal will be presented to the next of kin of Vermont's fallen warriors with full military honors. All of Vermont's veterans are invited to this momentous event hosted by the Vermont National Guard. The ceremonies will commence at 1 P.M. at Camp Johnson in Colchester. Please extend our invitation to your entire membership and a special invitation to your color guard to join us in honoring Vermont's heroes. The Massing of the Color Guards is being coordinated by the Military Order of the World Wars. Please have your color guard contact Chief Don Finger at 802-654-0124 for final arrangements. This is a momentous event we have planned for those who so richly deserve the recognition but it cannot happen without your help because funds are short. The Vermont Legislature failed to appropriate enough money to cover the cost of the medal and accommpanying citation and they failed to allocate anything for the costs of the ceremony. We must rely upon the good citizens of our state for their generous contributions and on the support of your organization. Our expenses for this event will exceed $15,000. Won't you join us in this long overdue tribute to Vermont's fallen warriors and their Gold Star parents with your most generous donation? Your tax deductable contribution should be made to "VVA Vermont State Council," P.O. Box 4146, Bennington, VT 05201.

I am sure you will agree this is a fitting tribute to those Vermonters who have given their lives in defense of this nation. We look forward to seeing you at the Vermont Patriot's Day ceremonies.

Sincerely,

John J. Miner

JOHN J. MINER
President